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CIA Officer Sees Vietnam Stalemate

By the Associated Press

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CPYRGHT

A CIA officer has voiced "serious doubt that victory can be won" in South Vietnam and has suggested the eventual outcome might be a negotiated settlement. Administration sources said this is not the United States Government view.

The conclusion that no military end to the war against Communist guerrillas is in sight was expressed by Willard Matthias, a member of the Central Intelligence Agency's Board of National Estimates, in a June 8 paper on "trends in the World Situation."

Mr. Matthias wrote that the Communist Viet Cong has stepped up its offensive and the counter guerrilla effort "continues to flounder" under poor prosecution by the Saigon government.

Continued large-scale United States support of the antiguerrilla campaign and an end to "further political deterioration within South Vietnam" could at least achieve "a prolonged stalemate," the CIA officer said.

Neutralization Urged

Mr. Matthias said there is also a chance that future developments "could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization." French President de Gaulle has suggested neutralization of the area; an idea coolly received by the United States Government.

Administration sources made the 50-page document available after learning it would be published in the Chicago Tribune.

Mr. Matthias wrote:

"The guerrilla war in South Vietnam is in its fifth year and no end appears in sight. The Viet Cong in the south, dependent largely upon their own resources but under the direction and control of the Communist regime in the north, are pressing their offensive more vigorously than ever.

"The political mistakes of the Diem regime inhibited the effective prosecution of the war, which is really more of a political contest than a military operation, and led to the regime's destruction. The counter guerrilla effort continues to flounder, partly because of the inherent difficulty of the problem and partly because Diem's successors have not yet demonstrated the leadership and the inspiration necessary.

"There remains serious doubt that victory can be won, and the situation remains very fragile. If large-scale United States support continues and if further political deterioration within South Vietnam is prevented, at least a prolonged stalemate can be attained. There is also a chance that political evolution within the country and developments upon the world scene could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization."

Private Views

In releasing the paper, administration sources emphasized these views:

• Mr. Matthias was expressing his own views, not those of the United States Government or of any agency within the United States Government. Members of the National Intelligence Estimates Board, a 12-man CIA committee and others have written numerous papers which are valuable for circulating ideas but do not represent policy.

• Mr. Matthias's memo was circulated among a few lower-ranking officials but was never given to the policy-getting National Security Council. It was submitted for publication to a magazine, which turned it down.

• The antiguerrilla campaign in South Vietnam may be long and arduous, but the United States Government is fully committed to stemming the insurgents there, and believes this will be done.